



# LYNN RIVERS' HEALTH WATCH

November 1999

## H.R. 3070: The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999

This bill passed the House, with a yes vote from Lynn Rivers, on October 19, 1999. If it goes into law, it will allow people with disabilities to retain Medicare and Medicaid coverage after they reenter the workforce. It expands eligibility for Medicaid and extends Medicare coverage to 10 years after persons return to work. In addition, the bill allows states to provide Medicaid to workers who are not classified as disabled, but have medical problems that are "reasonably expected" to become severely debilitating. That provision would be extremely beneficial to HIV-infected persons who cannot afford the expensive medications through Medicaid. In addition, H.R. 3070 creates a Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program to allow persons with disabilities greater choice of vocational rehabilitation and employment services providers. Source: CRS Brief RL30189, National Journal American Health Line 10/20/99

## H.R. 2130: Hillory J. Farias Date-Rape Prevention Drug Act of 1999

This bill passed the House on October 12, 1999, with a yes vote from Lynn Rivers. It amends the Controlled Substances Act to add gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB--also called G, Liquid X, Liquid Ecstasy, Grievous Bodily Harm, Georgia Home Boy, Scoop) to schedule I, ketamine to schedule III, and gamma butyrolactone as an additional list I chemical. A behavioral depressant and a hypnotic, GHB is being used in conjunction with alcohol and other drugs with detrimental effects in an increasing number of cases. It is difficult to isolate the impact of such drug's ingestion since it is so typically taken with an ever-changing array of other drugs and especially alcohol, which potentiates its impact. This bill would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a plan for carrying out a national campaign to educate the public on the dangers of date-rape drugs and the penalties that will incur if a person is in possession of the drug.

## H.R. 2723: Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999 (Norwood-Dingell Patients Bill of Rights)

This bill passed the House, with a yes vote from Lynn Rivers, on October 7, 1999. It establishes a set of patient protections, including ensuring that health plans cover emergency care--without prior authorization and regardless of whether the emergency facility is in the network--when a "prudent layperson" could reasonably believe he or she required emergency care. It also includes such provisions as direct access for women to ob-gyn care, and permits parents to choose pediatricians as primary care providers.

The Norwood-Dingell bill requires plans to establish both an internal and an independent external appeals process to review denial of care and to make decisions on those appeals in a timely fashion.

A key feature of the Norwood-Dingell bill is that it permits patients -- or their estates -- to sue their health care plan in state courts when they make negligent decisions that result in injury or death of patients.

On the day of the vote, Lynn Rivers offered this response to the bill:

*While I cast my vote today in favor of the protections given by the Patients Bill of Rights, I am greatly concerned with the partisan politics that have worked great mischief in the preparation of this proposal. Specifically, I condemn the House majority leadership's manipulation of the rules process to exclude the funding mechanism advanced by the bipartisan sponsors of this bill. In light of this indefensible action by the opponents of the Patients Bill of Rights, H.R. 2723 comes before the House without compensatory new revenues or budget offsets attached to it. In short, it is unclear where the dollars to implement this bill will come from. And, inevitably, the cynical and strategically constructed attack of "spending Social Security money" will be leveled against those who vote in support of these protections. I cannot emphasize enough how dishonest, manipulative, and irresponsible the House majority leadership's strategy is. It puts a serious initiative supported by the majority of Americans at risk for no other reason than partisan politics. This is among the most shameful things I have witnessed during my time in Congress.*

*I am voting yes on H.R. 2723 because I support the protections contained in it. I AM NOT VOTING IN FAVOR OF INVADING THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND. I have made a practice of voting against unfunded proposals, sham emergency spending, and budget gimmicks of all types. In this particular case, I firmly believe the Senate will not behave in the egregious manner of the House. I believe the Senate will attach appropriate funding to this bill before it returns to the House. If that is done, I will happily vote to send H.R. 2723 on to the President for his signature. If it is not done, I will unflinchingly vote against it.*



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# Cancer Information Sources

Cancer affects nearly every one of us. The disease shows no discrimination, affecting family members, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. A diagnosis can be frightening and overwhelming, but there are government resources available to help you understand what research has been done and to provide you with the most relevant and up-to-date information. Here is a listing of sources, from the National Cancer Institute, to help patients, family members, and health professionals obtain needed information.

Information about cancer is available in libraries, on the Internet, and from many government and private sector organizations. Most libraries have resources to help locate cancer-related articles in the medical and scientific literature, as well as cancer information written specifically for patients and the public. Many libraries offer public access to computer databases, allowing users to obtain information electronically. Also, information on the Internet can be accessed using a personal computer.

The Internet is a worldwide system of computer networks containing information on a wide variety of subjects, including cancer. Internet users can find information through the World Wide Web (WWW) and electronic mail (e-mail). The WWW allows access to information that may include text and graphics or text only. E-mail can be used to order documents and communicate with other people who can answer questions and offer technical support.

## National Cancer Institute

The National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service (CIS) is a national information and education service that provides up-to-date, accurate cancer information for patients, their families, the general public, and health professionals. The CIS also serves as a resource for education and outreach to minority audiences and people with limited access to health care information or services. The CIS responds to calls in English and Spanish. The toll-free telephone number for the CIS is 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). Deaf and hard of hearing callers with TTY equipment may call 1-800-332-8615.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has created a number of Web sites providing information on many cancer-related issues. These sites provide full-text versions of many NCI publications, fact sheets on a wide range of topics, and other information and resources for patients, their families, and the general public. NCI Web sites also include materials for health professionals and science teachers, as well as press releases

and background information for science writers and the mass media.

The following Web sites are accessible directly or through NCI's main Web site at <http://www.nci.nih.gov>:

- For Internet users interested in learning about clinical trials, NCI's cancerTrials™ Web site is a comprehensive clinical trial information resource. This site offers materials to help people understand and decide whether to participate in clinical trials. Recent advances in cancer research are also posted at this Web site. A simple-to-use search tool is available for those interested in finding trials for a specific type of cancer, geographic region, or a particular type of treatment. The cancerTrials Web site is available at <http://cancertrials.nci.nih.gov>.
- The CIS Web site provides background information on the CIS and links to other cancer resources. The CIS Web site is located at <http://cis.nci.nih.gov>.

## NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

### Cancer Information Service

**Toll-free: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)**

**TTY: 1-800-332-8615**

**Online: <http://www.nci.nih.gov>**

**CancerMail Service: To obtain a contents list, send e-mail to [cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov](mailto:cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov) with the word "help" in the body of the message.**

**CancerFax Service: Dial 301-402-5874 and listen to recorded instructions.**

- The NCI's CancerNet™ Web site contains selected information from PDQ®, NCI's cancer information database, including information about ongoing clinical trials. Over 100 PDQ information summaries are available for cancer treatment, screening, prevention, and supportive care. Written by experts and updated regularly, these summaries are based on current standards of care and the latest research. In addition, CancerNet contains the CANCERLIT® bibliographic database of more than 1.4 million citations and abstracts on cancer topics from the scientific literature. CancerNet can be accessed at <http://cancernet.nci.nih.gov>.

Many NCI materials are also available through CancerNet's electronic CancerMail Service. To obtain a Contents List, send an e-mail message to [cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov](mailto:cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov) with "help" in the body of the message. CancerMail responds by sending a Contents List back through e-mail. Instructions for ordering documents through e-mail are also provided.

NCI's CancerFax® service is yet another way to request NCI materials, such as PDQ summaries. A Contents List may be obtained by dialing 1-301-402-5874 from the handset of a fax machine and following the recorded instructions. There is no charge for this service except for the cost of the telephone call from the fax machine to the CancerFax computer in Bethesda, Maryland.

## Public, University, and Medical Libraries

Books and articles about cancer are available in public, university, hospital, and medical school libraries. However, not all hospital and medical school libraries are open to the public, so it is advisable to ask about their policies and to find out whether particular journals or books are available. If materials cannot be borrowed, most libraries have photocopying facilities; they usually charge a fee for this service. Librarians can provide help in using the resources and locating the appropriate materials.

*Index Medicus*® and *Abridged Index Medicus*® provide author and subject information about reports published in more than 3,000 health sciences journals. These two references can be found in medical school, hospital, public, and university and college libraries. If journals are not available, the staff can usually arrange an interlibrary loan. *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* is an index of articles in many popular, non-technical magazines and journals. This publication is available in most public libraries in print, and in some libraries on computer.

## The National Library of Medicine

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) is the world's largest scientific research library. The NLM is open to the public, and its databases can be used to search for journal articles and abstracts (summaries of articles). All of the NLM's databases are stored in a computerized system called MEDLARS® (MEDICAL Literature Analysis and Retrieval System), which can be accessed without charge through their web site, <http://www.nlm.nih.gov>. MEDLARS may also be available through some local university, public, and medical libraries.

MEDLINE®, the largest of the MEDLARS databases, contains 11 million references to articles published since 1965. It is the computerized version of *Index Medicus*, with more entries and references. Abstracts and references come from approximately 4,000 medical journals published worldwide, covering all aspects of medicine. By searching MEDLINE, readers can find journal articles about specific topics, such as cancer, and, in many cases, can retrieve abstracts of the articles included in the databases.

TOXLINE® is another MEDLARS database available through the Internet. This database contains over 2 million references to the toxicology literature, with more than 9,000 new citations added each month. This database covers the biological effects of drugs and other chemicals. Other MEDLARS databases may also have cancer-related information online. Examples of these databases include AIDS information, audiovisuals, and book catalogues.

The NLM allows free access to its databases through Internet Grateful Med®. This system allows Internet users to search MEDLINE, TOXLINE, and other databases without knowing technical computer language. Grateful Med is available at <http://igm.nlm.nih.gov>. Internet users may also use PubMed, a free information retrieval service that provides access to MEDLINE. PubMed provides an easy-to-use search tool for find-

ing journal articles of interest in the health and medical sciences dating as far back as 1966. PubMed connects users to full-text articles at Web sites of participating publishers, and is linked to molecular biology databases maintained by the National Center for Biotechnology Information. PubMed is available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed>. Both Internet Grateful Med and PubMed allow users to place orders for copies of articles through a system called Lonesome Doc. There is usually a fee for articles.

A recent addition to the NLM collection on the Internet is MEDLINEplus. This Web site includes links to information about a number of health topics, medical dictionaries, databases (including MEDLINE), clearinghouses, directories, organizations, publications and health news, and consumer health libraries. People can access MEDLINEplus at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus>.

For more information on NLM programs, services, and hours of operation, individuals may contact the Office of Communication and Public Liaison at 1-888-FIND-NLM (1-888-346-3656) or 301-594-5983. The address is 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894. Online assistance is available at the NLM Web site at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov> on the Internet, and by e-mail from [publicinfo@nlm.nih.gov](mailto:publicinfo@nlm.nih.gov).

## National Network of Libraries of Medicine

The National Network of Libraries of Medicine directs health professionals, educators, and the general public to health care information resources. Callers are routed to regional medical libraries, which can provide assistance with research. Further information about this network is available by calling 1-800-338-7657.

## Combined Health Information Database

The Combined Health Information Database (CHID) is produced by health agencies of the Federal Government. It contains 18 databases that provide information about many health education resources. Among these are two cancer-related databases: Cancer Patient Education from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and Cancer Prevention and Control from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These are intended to serve patients, the public, health professionals, and health educators. CHID has information on books, pamphlets, audio and video tapes, reports, and low-literacy and non-English resources developed by numerous organizations. It also describes how to obtain these materials. CHID is available at <http://chid.nih.gov>.

## Healthfinder

Healthfinder® is a Web site created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide a gateway to online consumer health information. It offers information on selected online publications, clearinghouses, databases, and Web sites, as well as support and self-help groups. Healthfinder also provides links to the Web sites of Government agencies and non-profit organizations that provide reliable health information for the public. Healthfinder is located at <http://www.healthfinder.gov>.

NATIONAL  
CANCER  
INSTITUTE

## ***Babies and Mothers are Living Healthier These Days***

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have reported a decline of more than 90 percent in infant and maternal deaths in the United States over the course of the twentieth century. In the early 1900s, six to nine of every 1,000 women died of pregnancy-related complications; by 1997, that number has fallen to less than 0.1. At the turn of the century, approximately 100 infants died before they reached their first birthday. The infant mortality rate has fallen to 7.2 per 1000 live births.

Researchers have attributed this impressive public health achievement to: environmental interventions, improvements in nutrition, advances in clinical medicine, improvements in access to health care, improvements in surveillance and monitoring of disease, increases in education levels, and improvements in standards of living.

Despite the dramatic decline in infant and maternal mortality over the past 100 years, challenges remain. Perhaps the greatest is the persistent difference in maternal and infant health among various racial/ethnic groups. African-American infants are more than twice as likely to die as white infants; this ratio has been on the rise in recent decades. Today, black women are more than three times as likely to die of pregnancy-related complications compared to white women. A thorough review of the quality of health care and access to care for all women and infants is needed to avoid preventable mortality and morbidity and to develop public health programs that can eliminate racial/ethnic disparities.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control, MMWR, October 1, 1999.*

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
WASHINGTON DC 20515-2213

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

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AND MAILED AT TAXPAYER EXPENSE

## **COFFEE HOURS**

### **\*Wednesday, November 10**

8:30am-10:00am  
Sweetwaters Cafe  
123 W. Washington, Ann Arbor

### **\*Thursday, November 18**

4:30pm-6:00pm  
Waltz Inn  
28104 Mineral Springs, New Boston

### **\*Monday, November 22**

8:30am-10:00am  
Sam's Meal Family Dining  
27125 Cherry Hill, Inkster

### **Tuesday, December 14**

8:30am-10:00am  
Tim Horton's  
41276 Ford Rd., Canton



### **Friday, December 17**

8:30am-10:00am  
Mr. Muggs Coffee & Cue  
217 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti



### **\*Tuesday, November 16**

8:30am-10:00am  
Wayne Restaurant & Coney Island  
3709 Metro Place Mall, Wayne

### **\*Friday, November 19**

8:30am-10:00am  
L.A. Diner  
2376 Carpenter Rd, Pittsfield

### **Thursday, December 9**

8:30am-10:00am  
Modern Coney (Kroger Plaza)  
5912 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City

### **Wednesday, December 15**

8:30am-10:00am  
Silverman's Restaurant  
36480 Plymouth Rd., Livonia



## **FORUM**

### ***Healthcare Policy in America***

#### **Monday, December 6**

7:00pm-9:00pm  
Washtenaw Community College  
Morris Lawrence Building, Room 101  
4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor

\* All November events may be canceled due to extended budget negotiations. Please call the district office at (734) 485-3741 to confirm the schedule.

## **TOWN HALLS**

### **\*Wednesday, November 17**

7:00pm-8:30pm  
Northville City Hall  
215 W. Main St., Northville

### **Thursday, December 2**

7:00pm-8:30pm  
South Middle School  
45201 Owen St., Belleville

*Lynne N. Rivers*  
M.C.